

VLR- 11/19/74 NRHP- 2/18/75

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Loudoun
FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY DATE

1. NAME			
COMMON: Morven Park			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 1 mile northwest of Leesburg, 1.9 miles east of intersection of Routes 7 and 9.			
CITY OR TOWN: (Leesburg vicinity)		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Tenth Joel T. Bro hill)	
STATE Virginia	51	Loudoun	CODE 107

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Nature trails Equestrian Center

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Charles L. Otey, Resident Manages Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation, Inc.			
STREET AND NUMBER: Morven Park, Route 2, Box 50			
CITY OR TOWN: Leesburg	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION.			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Loudoun County Court House			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Leesburg	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2)			
TITLE OF SURVEY: (1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory (see Continuation Sheet) #1			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1958	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> County
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D. C.	CODE 11	

STATE	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
Virginia		
COUNTY		
Loudoun		
FOR NPS USE ONLY		

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Morven Park estate consists of a large, complex country house in a magnificent setting at the base of the southern end of the Catoctin Mountain range. The view of the mansion with its spacious park and fields before it, and the mountain rising abruptly behind, forms one of the most romantic vistas in Virginia. In addition to the house and park the estate has a notable boxwood garden and a fine complex of farm buildings, both installed during the occupancy of Westmoreland Davis.

The mansion has had a complex development, evolving to its present form through a series of alterations and enlargements. The exact sequence of these changes has not been fully documented, thus the house's evolution is somewhat conjectural. The beginning of the existing structure is thought to date from around 1780 with a simple native fieldstone house now incorporated in the northwest corner of the north wing. Though made inconspicuous by its stuccoed exterior, this structure is discernible because its axis is slightly shifted in alignment from the rest of the building.

In 1808 the property was acquired by Judge Thomas Swann who around 1830 erected the two-story center portion of the present house, as well as two flanking two-story dependencies. These dependencies may have been attached to the center house by passages, giving the house a five-part Palladian scheme, but this is not certain. Little is known of the appearance of Judge Swann's house other than it was built of brick. The interiors of all three sections have been removed in later alterations.

Around 1850, Judge Swann's son, Thomas Swann, Jr., engaged the Baltimore architectural firm of E. G. Lind and William T. Murdock to provide design for an extensive remodeling of the house. A handsome perspective rendering of the proposed remodeling dated 1851 survives in the possession of Thomas Swann's descendant, Mrs. Charles Gillet of Baltimore. The rendering shows that the architects proposed to encase the existing structure in an elaborate Italian Villa style complex highlighted by four towers (the principal one to be some five stories high). Further embellishments included fancy wooden porches, long casement windows with elaborate hood moldings, and various groups of statuary on the roofs. An enlarged center section was shown to be fronted by a massive tetrastyle Greek Doric pedimented portico. There is some question as to whether this portico was part of the Lind and Murdock scheme or an addition made during the lifetime of Thomas Swann, Sr. In any case, the house was remodeled essentially as planned except that only the bases of three towers were built and the statuary was omitted. One of the smaller towers was completed but later removed.

Further additions to the house were made during the occupancy of Thomas Swann's daughter and her husband, Dr. Shirley Carter. These included some service rooms and a large octagonal-ended music room attached to the rear of the center section. The house was again enlarged following its acquisition by Westmoreland Davis in 1903, but the exact nature of Davis's changes has not been definitely established. He may have been responsible for increasing the connections between the wings and the center section to two full stories, as they are shown as only one-story high on the Lind and Murdock rendering. Davis also carried out much redecoration on the interior.

(see continuation sheet #2)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☒ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | Equestrian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of Virginia's most impressive country seats, Morven Park was the home of Westmoreland Davis, governor of Virginia from 1918 to 1922. The estate's focal point is a sprawling Greek Revival mansion dramatically set against the base of the southern end of the Catoctin Mountain range. The house is significant for its evolutionary development; it grew from a small late-eighteenth-century fieldstone cottage to its present appearance through a series of alterations extending over a one hundred-year period reflecting the tastes and status of its various owners. With the house's extensive facade and massive Doric portico, the mountain as a backdrop, and the sweeping fields in the foreground, few scenes in the Commonwealth provide so romantic a picture of Southern grandeur.

The earliest part of the house dates from around 1780 and was purchased along with 262 acres in 1808 by Judge Thomas Swann from Wilson Cary Selden of Exeter plantation. Judge Swann enlarged the house considerably and increased the size of the estate to 1400 acres. In 1840 Morven Park was inherited by Judge Swann's son, Thomas Swann, Jr., of Baltimore. Distinguished in public affairs, Thomas Swann served as mayor of Baltimore, governor of Maryland, a United States congressman, as well as president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Following his acquisition of Morven Park he commissioned the Baltimore architectural firm of Lind and Murdock to remodel the house into a grandiose combination of Greek Revival and Italian Villa styles. Except for the omission of three Italianate towers and some minor details, the scheme was carried out generally as planned.

Thomas Swann, Jr. died in 1883. His daughter, Mary Mercer Carter, wife of C. Shirley Carter, was the last member of the Swann family to live at Morven Park. She sold the property in 1898 to Mary Theresa Rush Howell who in turn deeded it to Elizabeth H. Scott. In 1903 Westmoreland Davis, a former Richmond native, purchased Morven Park from E. B. White.

Giving up his New York law practice when he acquired Morven Park, Davis set about to become a Virginia planter and make Morven Park a lavish Edwardian estate. He became a breeder of prize livestock and was active in agricultural affairs, serving as president of the Virginia State Farmers' Association and president of the Southern Planter. Mrs. Davis concentrated her efforts at Morven Park on establishing the extensive formal gardens, some of the most notable in the state. Together the Davises set a standard for hospitality and living on a grand scale that had had few equals in twentieth-century Virginia.

(see Continuation Sheet #3)

OR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Loudoun County Deeds and Wills, Loudoun County Clerk's Office, Leesburg, Va.

Genealogy supplied by Mrs. Charles (Swann) Gillet of Baltimore, Maryland, recorded in Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

Sale, Marian Marsh, "Morven Park," Commonwealth, November, 1969.

Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation, Inc. Annual Report, 1966.

19. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	39° 09' 05"	77° 35' 09"			
NE	39° 09' 05"	77° 32' 47"			
SE	39° 07' 36"	77° 32' 47"			
SW	39° 07' 36"	77° 35' 09"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1200 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

II. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff	
ORGANIZATION:	DATE	November 1974	
STREET AND NUMBER:		221 Governor Street	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE	
Richmond	Virginia	51	

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.
Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Title _____

NOV 19 1974

Date

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Loudoun	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

1972

State

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia (code: 51)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #2

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Loudoun	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

Morven Park has recently been extensively renovated and now serves as a museum complex. The house has been restored to the appearance of Westmoreland Davis's ownership and contains many of the Davis furnishings.

CCL

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet) #3

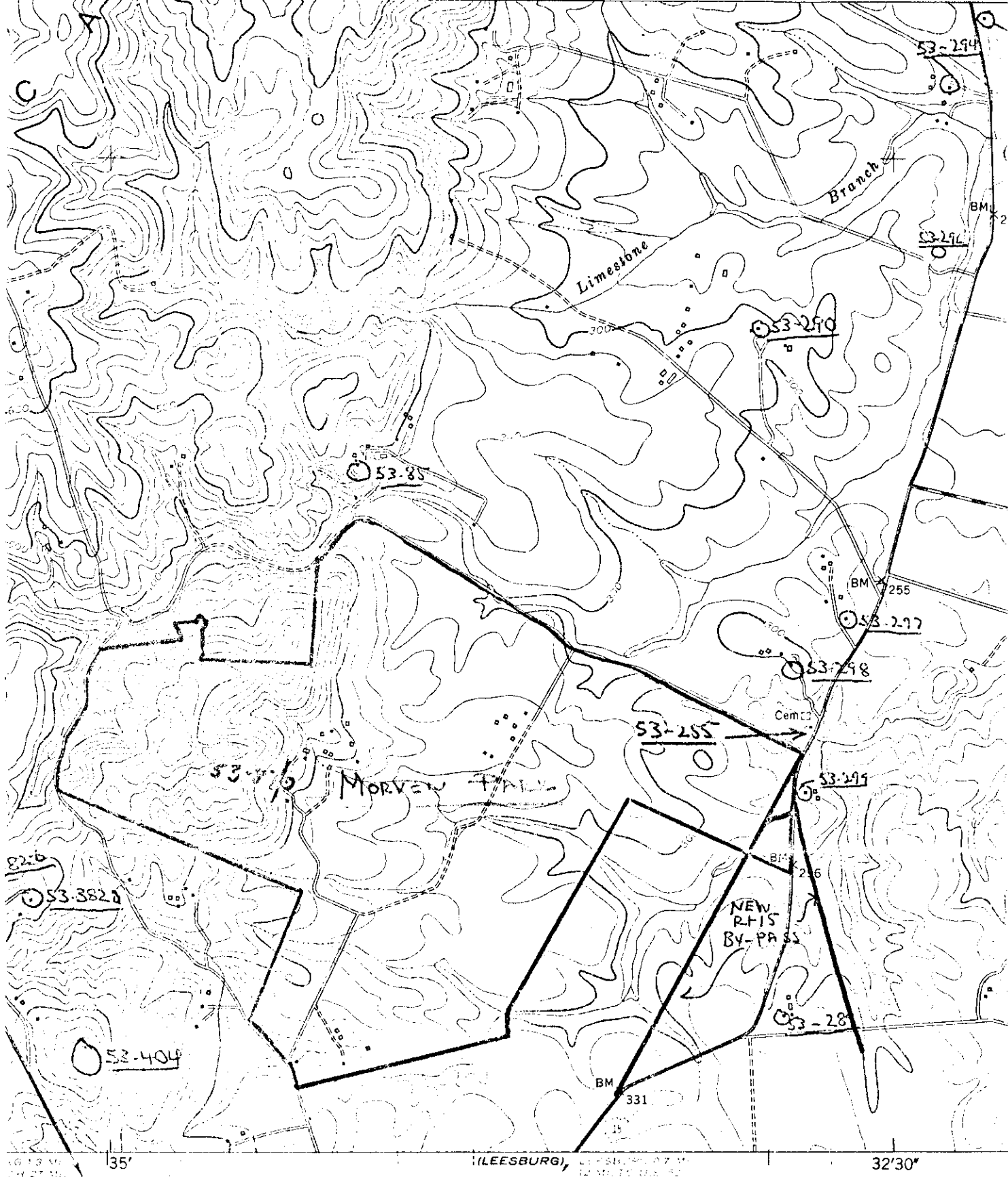
STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Loudoun	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

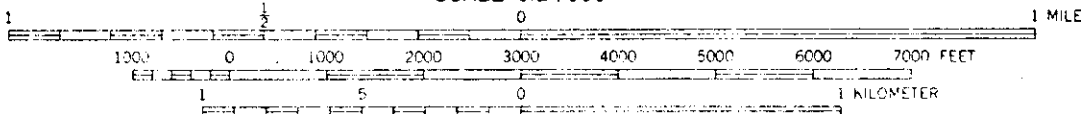
8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

In 1955 Mrs. Davis established the Westmoreland Davis Foundation, Incorporated to make Morven Park a cultural center. The house and gardens were renovated and opened to the public in 1967. The estate now has horticultural exhibits, nature trails, and an antique carriage collection, and is also the home of the Morven Park International Equestrian Institute.

CCL



SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

Water...
2

QUAD

U.S.G.S. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Waterford, Va.-Md. 1970

MORVEN PARK

	Latitude
NW	39° 09' 05"
NE	39° 09' 05"
SE	39° 07' 36"
SW	39° 07' 36"

Longitude
77° 35' 09"
77° 32' 47"
77° 32' 47"
77° 35' 09"

39° 09' 05"

39° 07' 36"